

Friday 5 #3

We're back!! We hope everyone had a great Christmas and are looking forward to a great 2024. I know we are!! A quick reminder of what this is: the South Barrington Park District decided to create #Friday5 to answer any questions we can find regarding the sale of Area N on Feb. 28. Our hope is to open the lines of communication between the park district and the people affected by the sale. As we said last week, these are questions or statements by residents we found on social media. Also, if you asked a question and did not see it answered, check back next week to see if your question or statement is answered. Also, if you'd like to make sure your question gets answered, feel free to send a question to Executive Director Jay Morgan at jmorgan@sbpd.net.

Let's get on this week's #Friday5:

Q: Under IL law, the PD must sell the land to the highest responsible bidder (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=007012050HArt%2E+10&ActID=892&ChapterID=15&SeqStart=17800000&SeqEnd=18700000>). Is the understanding that given the PD passed the referendum to sell Area N on the proposition that the sale would increase the tax base (<https://www.sbpd.net/referendum>), the highest "responsible" bidder would be an entity that honors the voters who passed the referendum and increases the tax base?

Answer: I think I know where you are headed with this question, so let me answer this and other similar questions like this: The board passed a sale requirement that clearly states the sale will be to the "highest responsible bidder." The park district is including as a condition of the sale that the property shall remain on the tax rolls. So, I believe the concerns you have about property taxes being paid from the parcel should be resolved. Basically, if the winning bidder plans to use 501C3 charitable status to avoid paying property taxes, then they will not be allowed to exempt the property from real estate taxation. It is expected, this property will generate tax revenue for years to come.

Q: I understand the PD will sell to the highest bidder and I also understand the last organization that was under contract will possibly bid again (even after all of the community disapproval). My question is, according to SB ordinance, if the land is sold to a place of worship doesn't it HAVE to be a public place of worship?

Answer: I think I get where you are going with this but understand the way you framed it here is confusing. All places of worship in South Barrington are considered private property because the land is owned by a private entity. This includes such "established" churches like Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington and The Practice Church. All places of worship have the right to open or close their doors to outsiders any time they see fit. For example, Willow Creek is not open 24/7/365 and closes at specific times. The hours of operation are set by the religious group who own the land. There are no caveats to block any religious group from either opening or closing at specific hours or keeping their doors open "to the public" because all churches are deemed private property. The village would be the entity to interpret its ordinance as to what is considered a public place of worship.

Q: I would argue that the referendum to increase taxes in order to improve the Barrington District 220 Schools passed even though many residents no longer have children in the district and didn't have a vested interest technically yet it still passed. I think even the neighborhoods not directly affected by developing Area N would still have a vested interest in improving parks near them like Dunteman for example and therefore there might be a better chance than one might think for such a referendum to pass.

Answer: That is – of course – the opinion you are welcome to have. However, the media has reported higher than normal tax rate increases are expected in the northwestern section of Cook County in the coming year. In addition, the vote total from the last election was 771 and there are over 4,000 registered voters living in South Barrington. This means we'd need at least 400 votes to pass the election based on voter turnout in the last election, but because this is a presidential primary year, we expect we would need about 1,800 yes votes to get the referendum approved. Now, I'm not sure if 1,800 people in South Barrington share your opinion that they'd be willing to pay more money in the future to the park district. On top of that, the park district board would like to avoid adding even more taxes to the lives of South Barrington residents if we are able to do so, and having a property like Area N available for sale for the right price makes more fiscal sense than trying to pass a referendum to raise taxes at this point in time. While it's great knowing we would have your vote, we truly doubt a tax rate increase would be approved by a referendum at this juncture.

Q. A LONG question came in that basically raised concerns about how the proceeds from the potential sale will be used and which parks will be renovated.

Answer: The majority of the proceeds will be used to make significant upgrades to Dunteman Park, which happens to be the original park in the district that was built almost 40 years ago. Maintenance projects have been completed at Dunteman Park over those 40 years, including tennis court resurfacing, ball field renovation and installation of sand volleyball. Unfortunately, routine maintenance projects will not be enough to bring this park up to the standards our residents deserve. The park district is looking to the residents to join staff in developing a plan to renovate Dunteman and our other parks as funds allow. If you are interested in helping plan the renovation and upgrades to our parks, please contact Jay Morgan.

Q: Q: Has the South Barrington Park District been publicly announcing the auction?

Answer: This is a similar question to the one last week. But, because it was asked, the auction has been publicized in many locations including through the auctioneer website, the park district website, through signage on the property, and through this attached social media ad running repeatedly across our social media. The goal is to make sure EVERYONE in the South Barrington Park District knows about the auction. Here's the graphic we have been running:



SOUTH BARRINGTON PARK DISTRICT REAL ESTATE AUCTION



AREA N

Property location: corner of Bartlett Road and Route 59 in
South Barrington

FEB. 28 @ 5:30 P.M.

South Barrington Community Center
3 Tennis Club Lane, South Barrington

For more information,
<https://www.sbpd.net/area-n>

